



January 12, 2007



## **Providence man is sentenced to eight years in prison for firearms and drug trafficking offenses**

A federal judge today sentenced **Jose Diaz**, of Providence, to eight years in federal prison for being a felon in possession of a firearm and trafficking in crack cocaine. In September, 2005, Providence Police seized a handgun and crack cocaine from Diaz's apartment on Barry Road.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the sentence, which U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith imposed in U.S. District Court, Providence.

In March, Diaz, who is also known as "Tutu," pleaded guilty to the firearms charge and to possessing with intent to distribute crack cocaine. At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter F. Neronha said that the government could prove that, on September 7, 2005, Providence detectives executed a search warrant at an apartment on Barry Road. Diaz was in the apartment at the time. From a living room table, detectives seized 26 packages containing a total of 6.87 grams of crack cocaine. In a bedroom dresser drawer, detectives found a .44 caliber handgun and a box of matching ammunition. The pistol was equipped with a scope.

Diaz has several prior convictions, including a 1997 felony drug-trafficking conviction and several convictions for domestic violence.

-more-

Providence Police and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter F. Neronha is prosecuting it as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. As part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, the U.S. Attorney's Office, working with Providence Police, ATF, the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, and other agencies, aggressively prosecutes federal firearms offenses in an effort to incarcerate gun offenders and deter others from committing gun crimes. Since 2001, federal firearms prosecutions in Rhode Island have more than doubled and gun offenders have been sentenced to a total of more than 750 years in federal prison.

-30-

Contact: 401-709-5032

[Thomas.connell@usdoj.gov](mailto:Thomas.connell@usdoj.gov)

**Find news and information on the U.S. Attorney's Web site:**

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/ri/>